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A history of Dalton
Methodism



Methodist Episcopal Church
Dalton

A History of Dalton Methodism

By

CORA HITT SMITH



1927

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"The best of all is, God is with us."

John Wesley

Methodist

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To My Mother
MAHALA TOWER HITT

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I

Foundations

“**J**OHNN WESLEY towers above his generation and our own because he had the courage to be what so few of us are—independent of the ordinary standards and opinions in the midst of which he lived. From the society by which he was surrounded, a society false to God and false to man, one turns with relief to this pure-eyed prophet of the flaming heart and logical head.” Dr. S. Parkes Cadman offers this tribute to the founder of Methodism. In all the history of the church, there never was a time when the oft-quoted words of St. Augustine were more true: “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity.” Chill and gloom were settling on England; Voltaire and his like were poisoning France; and Frederick of Prussia, with the Rationalists, was desolating the Faith in the very home of Luther. But the God who reared and trained Moses was preparing a man to rescue His church and bring into the world a new evangelism.

The Wesley history can be traced as far back as the 14th Century, and it is interesting to find in almost every generation an eminent clergyman and scholar. John Wesley was born on June 17, 1703, in a family of high respectability in the south of England. God’s hand leading Wesley in all the events of his life is clearly seen, but more especially in the preservation of his physical life in the burning of the Epworth parsonage when a child of six years, and in the revival of his spiritual life when he was directed in 1735 to the States, where the mission to Georgia failed but his acquaintance with the Moravians proved the turning-point in his religious history. After his return to England, he had much prayerful intercourse with Peter Böhler, a Moravian missionary, who under God turned the Oxford Methodist who had not succeeded in America into the London Methodist whose work fills the world. Wesley was fully convinced that the Christian

faith was not the intellectual acceptance of orthodox opinions, but "a vital act, and afterward a habit of the soul, by which man, under the spiritual influence of the Spirit of God, trusts in Christ and enters into living union with Him." The day on which this conviction laid hold on the heart and life of John Wesley, leading him to new trust and consecration and power, marks the birth of Methodism, and Wesley gave the date as May 24, 1738. The first Watch-Night in Methodism was January 1, 1739, and because of the power and spirit manifested in the meeting of John and Charles Wesley and Whitefield with some sixty brethren at love-feast, this date is often given as the time when Methodism truly began.

Beneath Wesley's calm exterior slept a very volcano of devotion to God and love to man, and his appeal was always directly and unmistakably to the human conscience. He never hesitated to depict sinfulness, while with the same breath and with manly and irresistible tenderness he enlarged upon the all-embracing love of God. The result was wonderful and unexampled. He had such audiences everywhere as speakers in England have seldom addressed before or since. During Wesley's itinerancy of half a century, thousands would come together and wait patiently for hours, until, with unfailing punctuality, the expected horseman appeared. Then followed the sermon, the effect of which was unparalleled. When Wesley died on March 2, 1791, in the eighty-eighth year of his age and the sixty-fifth of his ministry, he left a complete organization, amply endowed with modest equipment for effective working. A band of itinerants, five hundred and fifty in all, with veterans tried and true at its head, was in condition to operate the system, and one hundred and forty thousand living members were giving it loyal support. Today Methodism numbers approximately thirty million professed followers. Well may one say in the words of the founder: "What hath God wrought!"

Puritanism, disappointed in old England, came to New England to found a home for itself; Methodism, transplanted hither in the hearts of a few humble immigrants, established foundations upon which God and man have built through the years. An oft-quoted utterance of John Wesley reveals a wonderful breadth of vision for the growth of his own work and insight into the boundless opportunities for the future—"The World is My Parish." Methodism has advanced steadily until now all the countries of the world have been reached.

The event officially chosen from which to reckon the age of Methodism in America is the preaching of the first sermon by Philip Embury in his own house in New York in 1766, but there is no doubt that for several years before this there were homes and small settlements in which Wesley's doctrines were taught. With Embury had come his cousin, Barbara Heck, and a small party of settlers to New York in 1760. Mrs. Heck assembled four persons, who with herself formed the first Methodist congregation in America. A class was started with these five members and they met at Embury's house weekly. Thus Barbara Heck was distinctively the first American Methodist. Soon there were two classes of seven each. Three regimental musicians became exhorters and Methodist singing drew many to the meetings.

For a number of years after Methodism was firmly established in other parts of the United States, especially in the South, even its name was scarcely known in New England. The itinerants had early marked out their circuits, but it was not until the year 1791 that Francis Asbury, who had been sent from England by Wesley and became the "Bishop of North America," finally ventured to explore Massachusetts. By this time there were a good many "believers in free grace" scattered along the valley of the Connecticut, and the appointment of Jesse Lee to New England at the New York Conference of 1789 had much to do with the growth and success of Methodism in the East. Possessing a courage that nothing could daunt, he fearlessly presented his message

to the Boston mind, which was calm, logical, and averse to religious excitement. At the Conference in 1791, which opened in New York May 26th, the appointments for New England were headed by Jesse Lee, Elder, with eleven circuit preachers in charge of six circuits, one of which was Stockbridge, with Robert Green as leader. The first conference in New England was held in Lynn, commencing August 3, 1792. There were eight persons present besides Bishop Asbury, among whom were Jesse Lee, who was now exulting in having gained a permanent foothold, and Menzies Raynor, fresh from the revivals of the Hartford Circuit. Extensive revivals were reported in the regions of Lynn and Pittsfield in Massachusetts, of Hartford in Connecticut, and of Albany in New York, and the number of members reported was one thousand three hundred and fifty-eight, a gain of nearly nine hundred for the Conference year. Jesse Lee now returned for another year as Presiding Elder over all New England, in which territory were the following circuits: Lynn, Boston, Needham, Providence, Fairfield, Litchfield, Middletown, Hartford, and Pittsfield. This last circuit was, however, on the Albany District, and from that early period until the present time, Berkshire County charges have been part of the Troy and New York Conferences.

Throughout all New England, local histories show that churches were established soon after towns were settled. This was a legal requirement. Dalton proves no exception to the rule, and a year after the town was incorporated, a meeting for church organization was held. But Dalton has not always been known as Dalton. It was originally called Ashuelot Equivalent. In 1739, a number of towns in southern New Hampshire and Vermont were claimed by Massachusetts, and a controversy immediately arose over the claim. The dispute was taken before the British council, which decided against Massachusetts and gave all the territory in dispute to New Hampshire and with it a few odd thousand acres more than New Hampshire had claimed. Massachu-

setts had given many grants of land within this territory and had received money or services for them, but the decision of the council made these grants void. New Hampshire was glad to make the grants good in order to keep the settlers whom she had gained, and among those who received these grants were a number of men from Hatfield, who had land in the Ashuelot valley. These men, when their grants were transferred to New Hampshire, applied for others in this state, as they wished to hold their land in Massachusetts and not in New Hampshire. The General Court, therefore, allowed them to take an equal amount of land in the western section of Massachusetts, and they selected for their equivalent the land in the Housatonic valley on which Dalton is now located. They chose Ashuelot Equivalent for the name of the town. The settlement did not begin until 1755, but the Indian massacre at Stockbridge made things look so black in that section that the attempt at settlement at that time was only half-hearted, and it was not until five years later that the permanent settlement of Equivalent occurred. The records of Ashuelot Equivalent were unfortunately lost, so that not much of its history is known until its incorporation as a town on March 20, 1784. Its growth before that time had been rather slow, and most of the settlers had come through the influence of prominent families in the Connecticut valley. By an act of the Legislature the town was incorporated as Dalton, in honor of Tristram Dalton, who was then the speaker of the House of Representatives and who was later one of the first senators from Massachusetts. It is hard to tell why he was thus honored, except that he was exceedingly popular among the settlers.

On February 16, 1785, a meeting for church organization was held in the eastern part of the town of Dalton at the home of Captain Abijah Parks, and twenty-five persons subscribed to the confession of faith and the covenant, seventeen men and eight women. Thus began the Congregational Church in Dalton. The location of the first building caused

much controversy. Several votes were taken in town-meeting from 1786 to 1791, when a board of arbitration was appointed to settle the location of the building, which was soon after erected near where is now the east entrance to the Protestant Cemetery on Main Street. Recently the spot has been marked by a stone, bearing a bronze tablet with this inscription:—

Site of the First Meeting House
In Dalton—1791-1812
Congregational Church Organized 1785.

As the meeting-house was built by the town, it was used for its town-meetings as well as for worship. This church stood until 1812, when a much larger building was erected on the hill where Otis Street is now located, and not until 1825 was the parish separated from the town. The Congregationalists occupied this East Main Street church until February, 1889, when their present stone edifice was erected.

II

Methodist Beginnings in Dalton

IN THE year 1788, or 1789, Rev. Samuel Smith preached the first Methodist sermon which was ever heard in Dalton or its vicinity. Mr. J. E. A. Smith in his "History of Berkshire County" is the authority for this statement, but whether the sermon was called "Methodist" as decidedly different from a Congregational sermon, to which the settlers were by this time accustomed, or whether it was called "Methodist" because preached by a clergyman of that denomination, it is not stated. This historian gives the date for the introduction of Methodism into Dalton as 1788, just three years after the organization of the Congregational church. Rev. Samuel Smith was an itinerant minister in the Albany circuit, which in its immense territory included Berkshire County. In his travels he visited the settlers in the southwestern part of Dalton near the Washington and Pittsfield line, and this spot may be called the birthplace of Methodism in central and northern Berkshire. Mr. Smith's sermon was preached at the house of Zebulon Herrick, which stood very nearly in the southwestern corner of Dalton and close to the Pittsfield line. The appointment was continued at the house of Mr. Herrick until the ensuing fall, when it was changed to that of Nathan Webb, about a third of a mile farther west, but in Pittsfield. There it was continued for several years and until separate appointments were made for each place. Soon after the first sermon, a class was formed which included residents of Pittsfield, Washington, and Dalton, where, in the center of the town, another class was formed and meetings began to be held regularly.

The oldest church record in the possession of the local church contains the following account by Rev. Elijah B. Hubbard, Methodist preacher in Dalton in 1839:—

A BRIEF HISTORY OF DALTON CIRCUIT

"Dalton Circuit belongs to Troy District, Troy Conference, and is situated in the western part of the State of Massachusetts. It includes a part of two counties, viz.: Berkshire and Hampshire, and embraces four towns, viz.: Dalton, Hinsdale, Washington, and Middlefield. Methodism was probably introduced into Dalton, Hinsdale, and Washington about the year 1795, and into Middlefield, (by Bro. E. Washburn) January 1st, 1800. In the June following, the first class was formed, consisting of four members, viz.: Thomas Ward, Daniel Folley, Betsy Folley, and Mary Holland. Middlefield was formerly a part of Granville Circuit, subsequently of Buckland, Adams, and lastly of Pittsfield, from which it was separated in 1831, and assumed its present name. The Centenary of Methodism was celebrated on this circuit on the 25th day of October, 1839, and sermons preached by Bro. E. B. Hubbard and Bro. Ensign Stover, Preachers on the circuit; and subscriptions subsequently taken up for the objects contemplated by the Centenary Celebration." This Centenary Celebration commemorated the one hundred years which had passed since John Wesley's conviction led him into a broader life.

The year 1795, to which Rev. E. B. Hubbard refers as the time when Methodism was introduced into Dalton, is probably the year that Menzies Raynor came as the first Methodist preacher to speak in the center of the town, in the small wooden schoolhouse which stood on land which is now the west end of Center Park. His name appears in the list of eight men present with Bishop Asbury at the first Conference held in New England in 1792, and that year he was appointed to Lynn. In the General Minutes of 1795, "Bro." Raynor is noted as having withdrawn during that year, so that the probabilities are that this Methodist preacher visited Dalton as early as 1795. Rev. E. A. Blanchard, pastor of the church in 1875, recorded that Menzies Raynor was the first Meth-

odist who preached in Dalton, his informant being Dr. Ferry, who seventy-five years ago owned the Booth place on Main Street and was the only physician in town.

No attempt was made to incorporate a Methodist society until 1804, when the people of that faith in Dalton were joined with Hancock, Pittsfield, and Washington. Mr. J. E. A. Smith in his history gives a list of thirty-seven incorporators. The Legislature, during the same and next ensuing sessions, passed three acts supplementary to the act of incorporation and favorable to the new society.

Rev. Ebenezer Jennings, who became pastor of the Congregational church on September 8, 1802, wrote this in his "History of Dalton" in 1829: "There is a small society of Methodists, who commonly have preaching semi-monthly on the Sabbath, in each alternate week. They arose principally in 1812, though there were some before that time." As Parson Jennings was pastor of the Congregational society when the new church building was erected on "the hill" in 1812, he no doubt witnessed the new growth and activity in the neighboring church in that year and thoroughly appreciated this statement in another early record: "The Methodist Episcopal church located on Main Street was started in 1812, composed chiefly from dissenters from the Congregational church, on account of that society moving their church building to a new site, while some attached themselves to the church from political motives, connected with the late war with Great Britain."

About 1800, Lorenzo Dow was admitted to the Methodist Conference and did immense labor in western Massachusetts. He has been called the first Methodist evangelist in this country. His energy was intense; he would ride fifty miles and preach five times in a single day. A few of the older members in the Dalton Methodist church of today remember that they often heard their parents speak of Lorenzo Dow and of his preaching in this neighborhood.

Another preacher, whose name and work in Dalton are recalled, is Rev. Billy Hibbard. It is known that he preached in the schoolhouse at the center, and that he received fifty dollars for one year, for one sermon once a fortnight on Sunday afternoon. This was probably about 1814 when he was pastor in Pittsfield. Billy Hibbard was known as a circuit-rider, a man "most devoted, useful, and entertaining." He was named from a Governor of a state and put on the Conference roll as "William." He would not answer when that name was called. "Is not that your name?" asked Asbury. "It is Billy Hibbard." "But Billy is a little boy's name." "I was a little boy when my father gave it to me." The Conference was convulsed with laughter. In "passing his character," he was charged with practicing medicine. "Are you a physician?" asked the Bishop. "I am not. I simply give advice in critical cases." "What do you mean by that?" "In critical cases I always advise them to send for a physician." His wit was always ready.

Billy Hibbard was born in Norwich, Connecticut in 1771, but after a few years, his father moved his family to Berkshire County, where Billy was sent to school. On the 10th day of January, 1793, he married a young woman in Hinsdale, and later in that month he was converted at his father-in-law's home, though he writes in his "Memoirs" of an intense religious experience at the age of twelve. "The impression to preach I construed to mean only exhortation, for I could not believe myself qualified to preach, nor believe that I could acquire qualifications which could do honor to the cause of God in that station," he humbly records. In October, 1793, Hibbard went from Hinsdale "to the Methodist meeting, seven miles off, and there joined the class," which probably means the class started by settlers in the southwest part of Dalton. Because of Hibbard's distance from this society, he exhorted in Hinsdale, where "several experienced religion, formed a class of fifteen, and appointed him as leader." Conversions followed his earliest efforts, but he felt weak and

unworthy. At Pittsfield, he heard preach "a weak, a very weak, brother," who weakened as he went on. "He is weaker than I am, or, if I am as weak as he, I will never try to preach again," said Hibbard. The next morning he learned that five were converted under that sermon of "the very weak brother." "I hid my face in my hands and said, 'O Lord, marvelous are Thy works.' " He saw that the power was of God, and he never again spoke of weakness.

In his History he wrote, "Though my difficulties were many, by reason of my ignorance and poverty, yet I left all and went into the Pittsfield circuit with 'brother' Stebbins, by the direction of the presiding elder in the year 1797, and travelled with him until sometime in June 1798." At the Conference in September, 1798, the time of holding the annual Conference in September was changed to May or June. One year, his circuit was five hundred miles around it, and to preach as he did sixty-three sermons in four weeks, and travel five hundred miles, seemed to him "too hard," but he adds, "I cried unto the Lord and He heard me; for as my day was, so was my strength." He was ordained elder by Bishop Asbury in 1802. Many circuits saw and heard this good man, until in 1813 he was stationed at Pittsfield. At the next annual Conference in 1814, he decided to aid the Berkshire regiment as chaplain and offered to go if the army was called out, which he did in defense of Boston, while stationed for his second year on the Pittsfield Circuit. From June, 1819 to May, 1821 he labored in New York City. Here he suffered an affection of the lungs, and was appointed to Petersburg Circuit for one year. "It was my design," he writes, "to ask for a superannuated relation at the next Conference, but my presiding elder desired me to continue effective, at least so as to fill the station in Dalton; and my desire also was to continue in some easy station, in hopes I might recover my health, and not entirely break down. But all seemed in vain; my labors in Dalton, though moderate, frequently brought on an inflammation of my lungs. Wherefore,

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at the next Conference, I asked for a superannuated station." After about fifty years of consecrated labor, he departed this life, leaving a memory unique in Methodism. He was one of the most notable men in the history of Berkshire County and of his church.

This is the earliest record found of a Methodist preacher "stationed" in Dalton, and Rev. Billy Hibbard's pastorate from June, 1822 to May, 1823 is probably the first. No doubt he used the term "station" in connection with Dalton to explain his residence here while he cared for this part of the Pittsfield Circuit, as Dalton was but an appointment on a large circuit until 1831, when the name "Dalton Circuit" first appears, and Noah Bigelow and Freeborn G. Hibbard, a son of Rev. Billy Hibbard, were placed in charge. F. G. Hibbard was for fifty years the most effective preacher in western New York and widely known as an author. In the early years of Noah Bigelow's itinerancy, he served as co-laborer with Billy Hibbard.

No record is found of the preachers and work between 1823 and 1831, except mention of a minister by the name of Ross who preached sometime between 1820 and 1825, and little is known of the years immediately following, except the names of the men in charge. Rev. Edwin Genge added the names for the nine years previous to 1840, with which date Rev. E. A. Blanchard began his record. A list of the names of the Dalton Methodist preachers, with the date of their pastorates, will be found at the end of this account.



The First Church, Remodeled

III

The First Church

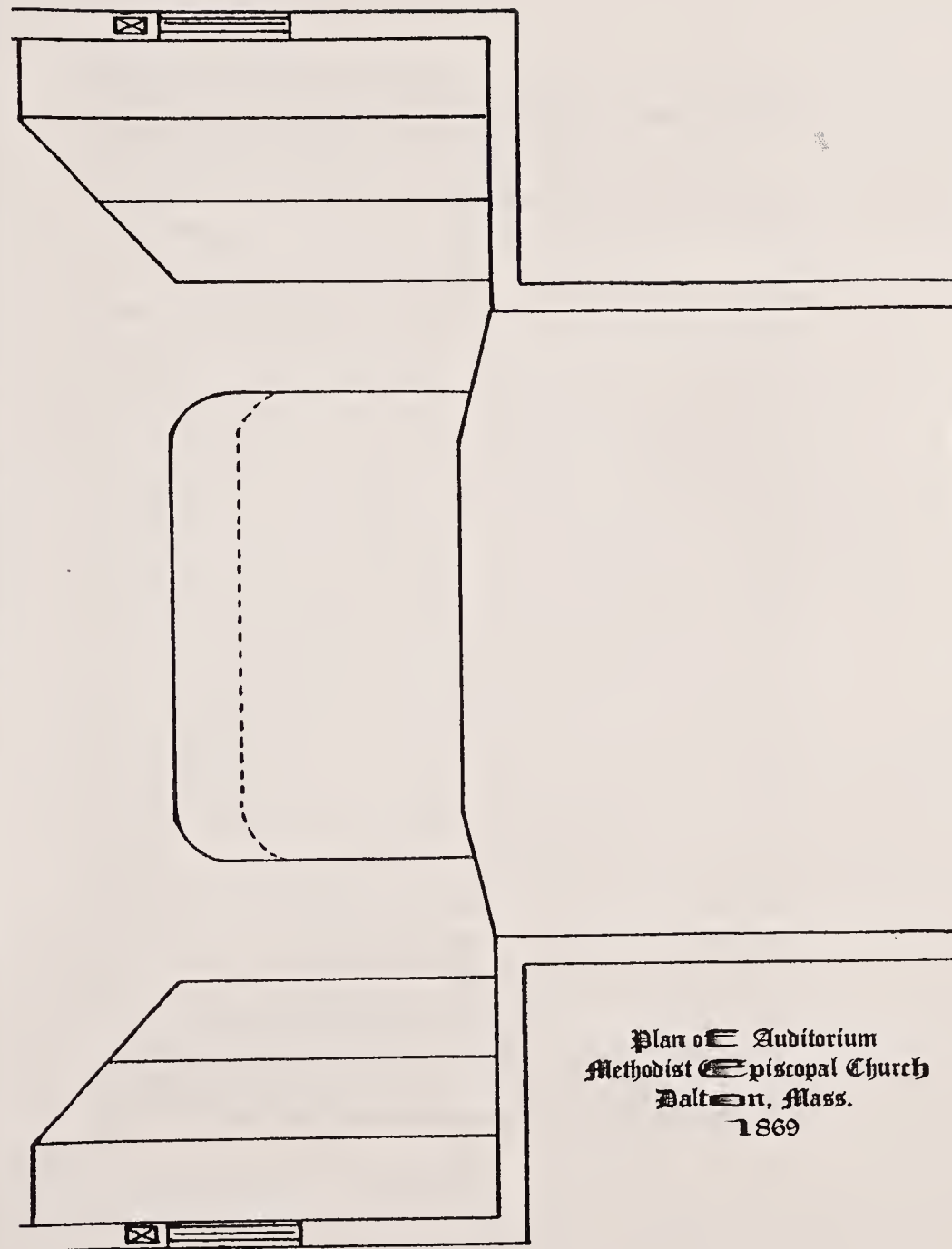
THE first Methodist church building, or meeting-house as it was then called, was erected in 1834 at a cost of \$1400. Griffin Chamberlain took the contract, but the builder was Charles Marsh. It was raised by a "bee," a neighborly gathering of the people, who united in giving material and labor for a common cause. Tables were set in the orchard, back of where the church was being raised, and dinner was served to all. At the conclusion, the preacher stood upon the loose boards on the floor of the frame and offered prayer. This first church building was a wooden structure, one story in height, and stood on the site of the present edifice. It was remodeled in the year 1850, under the pastorate of Rev. William Griffin. Thomas D. Thompson, a local preacher, and also a carpenter, worked as a day laborer in building the church, first in 1834, and, when it was remodeled in 1850, he did the work by the day, finishing off the basement and two class rooms, which were situated underneath the main room, where new seats were placed. The edifice was remodeled the second time in the year 1869, under the pastorate of Rev. A. Heath, and church services were interrupted for six months because of the repairs. The contract was taken by Rev. T. D. Thompson for \$3000, on which he claimed to have lost \$500. The building was raised up one story, leaving a good cellar beneath and bringing the "lecture hall" and two class rooms above the ground, while in the auditorium the gallery was removed. This copy from a blueprint made by D. H. and A. B. Tower for the remodeling in 1869 shows plainly the arrangement of the pulpit and pews, and may recall hours of inspiration and incidents of helpfulness to the minds of many Methodists living today.

The valuation of the meeting-house jumped from \$2500 in 1854 to \$3500 in 1867, and then with the second remodel-

ing in 1869 to \$8000, where it remained until 1888 when it reached \$10,000. As early as 1853, action was taken in the Quarterly Conference to have the property insured, so that for seventy-five years the trustees have followed this wise precaution. On Christmas Day, 1875, it was resolved that "If the money can be got on subscription this winter, the board of trustees are requested to add fifteen feet to the north end of this church in the spring." It is to be noticed that in the early days an indebtedness was seldom carried by any church. The vote resulted in success and soon this addition appeared on the rear of the building, as the plans of 1869 had suggested. The first floor of this addition was used as a kitchen, and in the space on the second floor, which backed the pulpit, was placed the organ and choir "loft." Formerly, as in all the old churches in New England, the choir sat back of the congregation, which, when singing, arose and turning faced the choir. An organ, which was purchased second-hand from Rev. Kimball, was worn out by 1875, and a new Estey was secured and placed in this addition, so that after this time the choir always faced the people.

In the autumn of 1888, the Congregational Society having resolved to build a new church, Zenas Crane, W. M. Crane, J. B. Crane, Byron Weston, Mrs. L. Weston, Charles O. Brown, and John D. Carson, members of that Society, who were joint owners of the organ used by the Congregational church, offered the organ as a gift to the Methodist Church and Society, to be removed when the new church was occupied. Accordingly, in March, 1889, the organ was removed and set up in the Methodist Church. The organ cost twelve hundred dollars when purchased in 1869. The gift was most gratefully received and appreciated by the trustees and people.

The first parsonage, valued in 1854 at \$1200, was built about 1848, and stood on the main street across the park nearly opposite and facing the first house of worship. By



vote of the Quarterly Conference, March 22, 1884, the trustees were authorized to sell the parsonage property to Byron Weston, who desired more land for the erection of his residence, "Westonholme." A place for the parsonage was secured farther west, and the present home for Methodist ministers was built in 1884 at an original cost of about \$2000, with a rental value then of \$120 a year.

The first Quarterly Conference for Dalton station was held at the parsonage August 11, 1848, with eight persons present: Z. Phillips, Presiding Elder, T. Benedict, Pastor in charge, T. D. Thompson, Local Preacher; three Class Leaders, Martin Chamberlain, A. H. De Maranville, and A. S. Bigelow; and two Stewards, Griffin Chamberlain and William N. Fuller. T. D. Thompson's name appears also as a Leader. The Presiding Elder came each quarter and held the Quarterly Conference, which is the governing body of the church. When these leaders could no longer visit all the stations on the district each quarter, and so were presiding only once or twice a year, their name was changed to District Superintendent, which more properly designates the office.

An old method of raising funds to support the church is first mentioned in the records for 1850, when "slip rent" resulted in \$46.50. Beginning with the next year, a committee was appointed each year to assess and rent the pews. The rental brought to the treasury in later years what was for those times large sums of money. Rev. J. J. Noe wrote in his record for 1888, "The method of bidding off pews at auction produced much alienation of feeling. I think the practice is highly inconsistent in a Christian church," and, just before leaving the pastorate, on March 12, 1889, he added with clear vision: "Systematic Giving is needed for the best results." Soon after this, pew rental was abolished, and the system of weekly subscriptions began.

One important committee to report at the Quarterly Conference each year, from the first meeting of the body in 1848 to the present time, is the committee to estimate the pastor's

salary. How the figures have changed with the years! The first record states that "the committee to estimate the amount necessary for the fuel and table expenses (for the pastor and family for one year) reports the sum of \$150 as necessary for said purposes." The Presiding Elder's claim on the station was \$13.48, and the "Quarterage," which signified the quarterly allowance paid the pastor, was \$224, making \$387.48 the total amount of expenditures for the year 1848. Evidently this sum of \$150 for fuel and food was too large, as for the next two years, the committee reported \$125 only as necessary. On July 21, 1851, the committee asked for \$200, and on December 5, 1857, the sum of \$236 was deemed needful, which with \$264 as "Quarterage" gave the pastor a total salary of \$500. From that date until 1870, the salary increased to \$800, which was the amount paid until 1890. However, a large item in the pastor's finances was the annual "Donation," which brought many necessities to the parsonage, even though they could not be counted in cash on the salary. From January, 1852 to 1889, "Donations" were given the pastor and his family, and various indeed were the gifts received. Some church members or friends brought food and aids for housekeeping and homemaking, while others gave wood for fuel and hay or grain for the horse and chickens. Often the dominie did not receive a wedding fee in money, but accepted whatever the happy groom chose to give, sometimes even driving home with a squealing pig fastened in the back of his carriage. It was not until later years that the wedding fee became traditional hat money for the minister's wife. The first sexton who cared for Methodist Church property in Dalton was appointed in 1852 and was paid \$25 for his year's service. In 1858, the bill for sexton, wood, and lights totaled \$46.50. Thirty years later the sexton received only \$60.

An important part of church worship has always been the music, but in the early days the organist and choir gave

their services, gladly and faithfully attending rehearsals and appearing regularly in their places on Sunday. The organist and choir and congregation sometimes forgot the unseen helper with the music, but when all sound ceased in the organ, attention was emphatically drawn to the humble boy or man in the background—the necessary organ pumper. One organist in speaking of a selection well played remarked with pride, "I played that well, didn't I?", to which the pumper replied, "You'd better say *we* did it well," but the player insisted on taking all of the credit. To the organist, intent on rendering the next selection in a manner most effective and equally pleasing to the congregation, realization suddenly came that the air was leaving the organ. Silence followed and all of the player's efforts failed to produce a sound. Then the pumper was approached with inquiries as to the trouble, and to the angry and distressed organist said, "Now will you say *We*? Say *We*, and I'll go on pumping." Needless to relate, apologies were made and the organist did not soon forget the lesson.

The first Sunday-school connected with the Methodist church was organized in 1826 by Griffin Chamberlain. In this school, William Renne, although only fourteen years old, was appointed by Mr. Chamberlain, who was his class leader, as teacher of a Sunday-school class among whose members was W. W. Carson, a brother of David and Thomas Carson, who became such good friends to Dalton Methodism. Under date of July 9, 1848, a complete re-organization was reported with the pastor as superintendent, seven teachers, and ninety scholars. The expenses for the year 1851 were \$13.53, and in that year a Bible class was organized. The report continues: "The scholars have been regular in their attendance and the teachers punctual and faithful in their work. The subject of Missions has been introduced in the school and an interest in the cause excited which it is hoped will result in good." The Sunday-school library held an im-

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portant place in the church life in the early years and often three or four hundred books were reported on the shelves or in circulation. Until the winter of 1858, it was necessary to close the Sunday-school, because of cold weather and drifted roads, but in the winter of 1854, three Bible classes with a total attendance of twenty-four kept active, especially the young man's Bible class under the charge of the pastor, Rev. H. H. Smith. The average attendance in 1858 was seventeen teachers and one hundred scholars. Usually the Sunday-school met directly after the morning service and this practice has been followed throughout the years. At first, a second church service was held in the afternoon, but in October, 1859, the time was changed and after that the people came together for evening worship. The mid-week service was for years known as the "Thursday Evening Meeting" as it was held on that night, and when the time was changed to Wednesday night, it was not unusual to hear that "the Thursday evening meeting will be held Wednesday night." This prayer service was supplemented by a "Young Men's Praying Band," which was organized in 1877, with Andrew J. Reed as leader. Rev. E. A. Blanchard records, "They did good service in the schoolhouses and had conversions. They conducted an extra meeting at Cranesville for several weeks, and in this meeting about a dozen were brought to Christ." He adds, "In the year 1875, there was a revival in the month of October in which there were forty-five conversions, and in the year 1877, in the month of January, there was another, in which about the same number were converted. During the last conference year (1877) there has been a continuous revival spirit, with occasional additions to the church."

In looking at the long list of names of members of the Dalton Methodist Episcopal church from 1844 to 1927, one is impressed anew with the truth of the words of John Wesley, "God buries His workmen, but carries on His work." Orig-

nally, all members of the church were placed in classes with leaders, and the first list of names, under date of February 24, 1858, is written in five groups headed by the names of the class-leaders—Rev. T. D. Thompson, George Washington Smith, George Cleveland, David C. Smith, and James Reed. The classes were kept up until 1878; then, after a lapse of fifteen years, Rev. C. S. Robertson rearranged the membership by classes, but the spirit and fervor of the early plan had waned. Each class met with its leader, either in homes or at the church, about once a week, and the leader was the spiritual adviser and teacher for the members of his class. Especially was this true when there were probationers in the class, young converts who were "on trial for six months" before admission to final membership in the church. All that remains of this class organization so unique and successful in Methodism is the "class-meeting" still held each Sunday morning at ten o'clock in the Dalton church. The membership in 1844 numbered 77; in 1875, 179; in 1894, 270; and at present in 1927, 373 active, with a "Non-Resident, Inactive List" of 93. The records show that between 1858 and 1899, there were at least 275 withdrawals by letter and 91 by death, a total of 366 removals. The membership in 1899 was 280 with 20 on probation, so that for the period of 41 years there was a total membership of 666. At least four members lived to an age above ninety years about that time and held long memberships in the church. Rev. T. D. Thompson, who was known throughout the town as "Elder" Thompson, died in 1888, at the age of ninety-three years, after serving the church as class-leader for over forty years and having been active in all of the church interests from at least 1834. Mrs. John Tyrrell, after seventy-seven years of membership, died at the age of ninety-three; Mrs. Eunice Hathaway, after seventy-one years in the church, died at the same age; and Mrs. Samantha Bentley, after a church membership of sixty-six years, died at ninety. At the present

time, three women hold memberships covering sixty years or more—Mrs. Fannie Johnson, who joined by letter about 1863, Mrs. Emma Bicknell, who became a member in 1864, and Mrs. Mahala Hitt, who entered the church from probation in 1867. The first time that the name of a woman appears on a Disciplinary Committee is in 1867, which seems early, since everyone then believed that the home and its interests were the only proper and sufficient consideration for women.

IV

The Summer of 1894

THE church continued to grow and interest increased until it seemed absolutely necessary that a new building be provided. During Rev. Charles F. Noble's pastorate there was considerable discussion as to the advisability of erecting a new church, and on June 17, 1891, it was voted in Quarterly Conference that "the edifice remain on the present site." A motion to build a new church was lost, but a committee was appointed to "consider the improvement of the property." Rev. Charles S. Robertson was sent by the Bishop in 1893 as Methodist minister in Dalton, and he at once set himself to the task of providing a more adequate house of worship for the congregation which increased in numbers from Sunday to Sunday. The estimated cost of the new building was \$15,000, and the committee and church people did not think they dared to exceed that amount, but four generous donors made a much finer structure possible: Thomas G. Carson, Byron Weston, Zenas Crane, and W. Murray Crane. Many other subscriptions were received from interested people in the town. The church members were so heartened and encouraged by the friendly spirit manifested by all that no sacrifice seemed impossible, and while some doubled their subscriptions, others denied themselves in every way, even the children going without butter on their bread that they might share in the great undertaking. The outcome was the present beautiful church, erected at a cost of \$35,000, which stands as a splendid monument to the faith and courage of Pastor Robertson and to the sacrifice and love of the men and women and children who were then members. The old house of worship was moved a short distance west in the spring of 1894, following the removal of the old town hall to its present location at the corner of Main Street and Daly Avenue, and the church was occupied on the

temporary site during the summer and fall. One Saturday afternoon in October at two o'clock a public auction was held, and the building used for sacred purposes for over sixty years was sold to Peter Daly, who moved the structure to the corner of High Street and Daly Avenue, where it now stands, made into a six-apartment block and owned by the Sawyer-Regan Company.

The Corner-stone of the new church was laid Sunday, May 6, 1894, and with the pastor at the exercises were Presiding Elder T. A. Griffin, Rev. G. W. Andrews, who was pastor of the Congregational church for about thirty-five years, and Rev. Herman Brady, pastor of the Baptist church, which was built on Carson Avenue and for a few years had a place in Dalton church life. Placed in the Corner-stone at the southeast corner is a sealed copper box which contains the following articles and papers:

CONTENTS OF CORNER-STONE

1. Testament used at the laying of the Corner-stone by Rev. H. E. Brady, Pastor Dalton Baptist Church.
2. Typewritten list of Subscribers to Building Fund with amount of their respective subscriptions.
3. List of Members and Probationers.
4. List of Members of Quarterly Conference.
5. Organization of the Sunday School for years 1893 and 1894.
6. List of members of the Choir.
7. Autographic list of members of the Epworth League.
8. List members of the Light Bearers, auxiliary to Women's Missionary Society, organized in 1892.
9. List members of the Friendly Aid Society.
10. Cabinet photograph of the Old Church Edifice.
11. Financial Report for the last church fiscal year, May 1, 1893 to April 21, 1894.
12. The Programme of Ceremonies at the Laying of the Corner-stone.
13. Copy of the Pittsfield Evening Journal of July 17, 1893, containing article in reference to New Church Building Enterprise.
14. Copies of the Berkshire Evening Eagle of July 28 and December 12, 1893, containing articles in reference to Church, with cut and description of new Church Building.
15. Sealed Envelope addressed "In His Name" (contents unknown) placed in box at request of Mrs. C. Florence Chamberlain.
16. Set of Columbian Postage Stamps, one to fifteen cent, in two-cent Columbian Stamped Envelope. Given for deposit by Postmaster M. E. Stockbridge.

17. On ~~e~~ ten (10c) cent and one twenty-five (25c) ~~cent~~ piece of U. S. Fractional Paper Currency, ~~P~~resented for deposit by Mr. A. F. Bentley.
18. Sil~~ver~~ Plate on which is engraved the date of ~~e~~rection of old and new Church Edifices, ~~n~~ames of present pastor and Building Com-
~~m~~ittee.

This list was prepared and recorded by a committee duly appointed for the purpose—Andrew J. Reed, Frank O. Bliss, and Sylvester Young.

On Monday evening, October 22, 1894, the Epworth League invited the church members and the public in general to Farewell Services which were held in the old building, beginning with a tea served at six o'clock. Today it seems strange to read of vehicles called "hacks," but then they were common and the best conveyance known. "Between the hours of five and six on the evening of the farewell exercises, hacks were busy gathering the older people who were unable to walk to the church." The choir of the evening was composed of about twenty-five singers, among whom were many of the old and retired members of the regular church choir. The Program consisted of singing, prayer by Lewis W. Crosier, the oldest male member of the church, and an Address of Welcome by Rev. C. S. Robertson, which was followed by the reading of a paper, "In Memoriam," in honor of the deceased members and of the old church building, by George Forbes. "Items of History" were read by Granville Olds, and George Cleveland, who had then been a member of the church for fifty years and was present at the raising of the frame of the first church structure, gave some interesting reminiscences. James D. Smith in his characteristic way gave the following original poem, which according to all reports brought forth a storm of applause:

REMINISCENCES

I can well remember,
When Dalton was so small,
It had but just one meeting-house,
And not even a town hall.

Then the Methodists met together,
Near the center of the town,
In that old, ancient schoolhouse,
That the storms had painted brown.

Of course it was old-fashioned,
And the poorest kind of seats;
But the people did not seem to care,
If they heard the parsons preach.

Such men as Billy Hibbard,
And Parson Bigelow;
And lots of others I might name,
That of course you would not know.

For they were smart and earnest men;
The preachers then talked loud,
But it made no difference not at all,
They always drew a crowd.

And when the parson knelt to pray,
He would find no one asleep,
And many a one would bow the head
And silently would weep.

But that old schoolhouse now is gone
And few remember its spot,
Or even those that worshipped there,
Their names are now forgot.

But fifty years has made a change;
There is nothing now remains,
Except these mountains and the hills,
And rivers run the same.

They have built their churches and public halls,
And many are moved away,
And now they build of brick and stone,
Expecting it to stay.

Just see the churches, so nice and fine,
And that hall with welcome doors,
And may they occupy those plants
Until time shall be no more.

James D. Smith

The climax of the evening's exercises was reached when Mrs. Chloe Woodworth read an original poem, full of sentiment and feeling, entitled "Farewell to the Old Church." Mrs. Woodworth, or "Aunt Chloe" as she is lovingly called by her many friends, who is now in her ninety-third year, vividly recalls that notable service and the spirit of devotion and enthusiasm in which the people worshipped within those sacred walls for the last time. Because of the beauty of the lines, which are especially appropriate to this chapter, her poem is here given in full.

A FAREWELL TO THE OLD CHURCH

We've gathered here to bid farewell
To this old church so dear,
'Twill cause us many a silent pang,
And many a sacred tear.

For there are precious memories
Connected with this place
So deeply graven on our minds,
That nothing can efface.

As we look back o'er vanished years,
They pass in swift review,
Parents and children, loved and gone,
Brothers and sisters, too,

Who worshiped in this holy place,
A faithful, trusting band,
Whose voices long have been attuned
In the bright spirit land.

Methinks I hear those voices now
In happy tuneful lays,
While shouts of joy went up to Heaven,
Mingled with prayer and praise.

Those good old hymns so full of zeal,
With pleasure I recall,
"All hail the power of Jesus' name,
And crown Him Lord of all."

Those voices filled this dear old church,
For all the people sang;
And oftentimes these sacred walls
With hallelujahs rang.

At this dear altar many a soul
Has sought the Saviour's face,
And gone rejoicing to proclaim
His wondrous love and grace.

And here the blushing bride and groom,
Have stood with modest air,
Until the pastor made them one,
And blest the happy pair.

And up the aisles in sable robes,
Have come with measured tread,
The mourning ones with aching hearts,
Beside their precious dead.

Could these old walls speak to us now,
What wondrous words we'd hear;
They'd tell of all the ministers
Who've stood with godly fear

To preach the truth in loving words,
To counsel and direct,
Striving with all their given powers
To comfort and protect.

They'd speak of earnest teachers, too,
Who sought with tender care
To lead the little ones to Christ,
By faithful work and prayer.

They'd tell of many struggling souls
Who strove to serve the Lord,
And passed away triumphantly
To reap their rich reward.

And there are many with us now
Who cling to this dear spot,
The many joyful meetings here
Will never be forgot.

The greetings warm, the pleasant smile,
The pressure of the hand,
All these, though simple they may seem,
The heart can understand.

These sacred memories cherished here,
Will long as life abide,
They'll comfort us in days to come,
Whatever may betide.

The builders of this temple fair
We would recall tonight,
For they were men of brains and will
And stood for truth and right.

'Twas not an easy thing for them,
For self must be denied,
And many a sacrifice, and still
They worked with honest pride

To build this house unto the Lord,
Where they might often meet
To worship Him with humble hearts,
And hold communion sweet.

And though this old church seems so plain
To us who see the new,
Yet in those early days to them
'Twas beautiful to view.

They left this landmark with the hope
That God would ever bless
Their faithful efforts here below,
And crown them with success.

Then let us as we leave this place
Our vows of faith renew,
In honor of their memory,
And strive to live as true.

May we leave everything behind
That tends to gender strife,
Pressing with earnest efforts on
To seek a higher life.

And though this landmark be removed
It's sacredness shall last;
We'll cherish in our inmost hearts
The memory of the past.

We meet tonight for the last time
Within this holy place;
We speak our farewell to this church
With tenderness and grace.

And though at a new shrine we kneel
Beneath a costlier dome,
Sweet thoughts will ever come to us
Of this our lowly home.

And as we say farewell, our hearts
With deep emotions swell,
The words seem lingering on our lips,
Farewell, old church, farewell.

Mrs. Chloe Woodworth

V

The Present Edifice

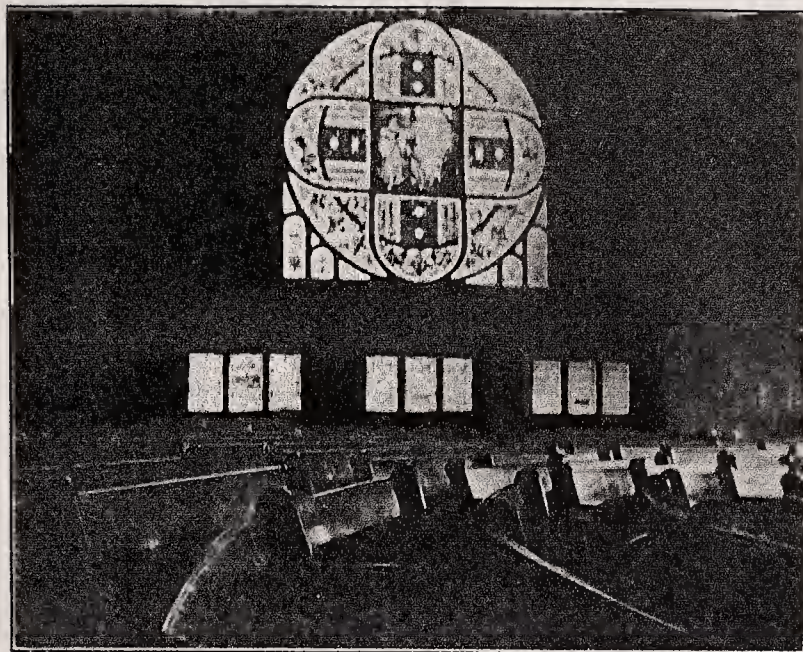
THE DEDICATORY services of the new church were held November 3, 4, 5, and 6, 1894, and began with an Organ Recital by John J. Bishop of Springfield, Massachusetts, on Saturday evening. On Sunday there were present with the pastor, Presiding Elder Griffin, who gave the sermon of the evening and conducted the dedication exercises, former pastors: Rev. C. F. Noble, Rev. F. G. Rainey, and Rev. J. M. Edgerton; the pastors of the three Protestant churches in Dalton: Rev. G. W. Andrews, Congregational, Rev. H. E. Brady, Baptist, and Rev. R. LeBlanc Lynch, Episcopal; also two other Methodist clergymen: Rev. J. F. Clymer, D.D. of the Pittsfield church, and Rev. G. W. Love of Lanesboro. The Rev. B. I. Ives, D.D. of Auburn, N. Y. gave the sermon of the morning and conducted the finances during the Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday exercises. He succeeded in securing nearly enough pledges to cover the cost of building the church. At the time, the trustees were A. J. Reed, President, Homer Bicknell, Secretary, S. L. Young, A. F. Bentley, C. H. Groesbeck, H. W. Hitt, G. L. Cleveland, E. D. Aldrich, and F. O. Bliss. The Building Committee consisted of the Pastor, Rev. C. S. Robertson, T. G. Carson, S. L. Young, E. D. Aldrich, and A. F. Bentley, and the Finance Committee was composed of the Pastor, H. W. Hitt, W. W. Schofield, C. H. Groesbeck, G. L. Olds, and Frederick McCoy.

The church built in 1894 at a cost of \$35,000 could not be duplicated today for more than twice that amount, and for the past few years an insurance on \$70,000 has been carried by the trustees. It is not only a beautiful structure, made of brick with red stone trimmings, but the rooms are so arranged and equipped that the building presents excellent conditions for all of the church activities. When the fact that

this edifice has been standing thirty-three years is taken into consideration, one marvels at the vision and insight which produced a church that today presents so modern an architecture and so much promise for the future. The auditorium, with raised floor and semi-circular seating, accommodates three hundred and fifty comfortably and opens by sliding doors into the Sunday-school room which will seat two hundred additional. Aside from the library and four small classrooms on this floor, there are two large rooms, one used by the Primary Department, and the other, known as the Conference Room, occupied on Sundays by the Fahola Bible Class and in general use at other times for all the smaller gatherings in the church. On the second floor are two small class alcoves and two large rooms which are used by the Kindergarten and the Brotherhood Bible Class. Much of the space on this floor may become a part of the auditorium by the use of the balcony. In the basement is a third large classroom, occupied by the Dorcas Bible Class and used as a Ladies Parlor for social occasions; also the kitchen with well-equipped pantries, the dining-room with movable partitions, separating four small class rooms, and the heating plant with electric organ motor in an adjoining room.

When the present church was erected, it seemed impossible to secure additional funds for a suitable organ, but some of the members especially interested in music worked wholeheartedly for the realization of the vision which they had and when the building was dedicated a fine Two-Manuale Steere organ was in place. This organ is still in use and has proved itself worthy throughout the years. In 1926, during Dr. H. C. Petty's pastorate, the choir adopted robes, adding much to the dignity and effectiveness of the service of song.

The Memorial windows were given by grateful sons and daughters in memory of the devoted Christian lives of their fathers and mothers. On the east side of the church are two windows, one to Rev. T. D. Thompson and wife, and the other to Cyrus Cleveland, while on the west, the two cor-



Interior View—Carson Window

responding windows were placed, one in memory of Abner Smith and Mary Smith and David Smith and Permelia Smith, and the second to Elisha Day and Sarah Day. Three smaller Memorial windows occupy the space under the Carson Memorial in the front, and bear the names of the Building Committee on the first to the left, Gideon Bentley and Samantha Bentley on the center window, and James Reed and Fidelia Reed on the one to the right. The exceptionally fine, large, circular window at the front was the gift of Thomas G. Carson, who presented the memorial in loving recognition of his father and mother. It is a Doré representation in colored glass of the Christ with Mary and Martha, and was placed in the church at an original cost of six hundred dollars.

The "Ladies' Social Aid Society," which was organized in 1878, purchased a bell for the old church belfry for seventy-five dollars in 1881, but when the new edifice was erected the old bell was disposed of, and the beautiful bell now in use was given to the Methodist people by Byron Weston.

At the first anniversary service held on Sunday, November 3, 1895, it was announced that the indebtedness was then \$7539.68. This was reduced so that when Rev. C. S. Robertson left in 1896, the debt was reported as \$6011. Great spiritual blessing and prosperity were attendant on the ministry in the new house of worship and many were added to the membership, the largest number ever reported in one year being in Pastor Robertson's term, when there was an increase of one hundred new members and the next year thirty more. The Rev. C. F. Wilcox was appointed as pastor in 1896, and the work continued to prosper during his pastorate of five years. With untiring energy, he labored to remove the church indebtedness and succeeded. The last official act of Rev. T. A. Griffin, D.D. as Presiding Elder of Troy District was to assist at the jubilee over the payment of the mortgage, which was burned at the public morning service on Easter Sunday, April 15, 1900. Rev. Mr. Wilcox reported

that the total amount contributed by the church for benevolence, current expenses, and cost of the new church since the corner-stone was laid six years before was \$48,788. Following the reading of the reports, S. L. Young, the treasurer of the board of trustees, handed the mortgage and notes of the church to the pastor, showing all indebtedness canceled. The notes and mortgage were placed in a tin utensil and burned to ashes while the choir sang the doxology. This same date, April 15, 1900, marked the completion of the services of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew J. Reed in the church choir, where Mr. Reed had served as director for twenty-three years and Mrs. Reed had been a valuable assistant. It was also in Dr. Wilcox's pastorate that electric lights were used for the first time in the church service, January 10, 1897.

The Tenth Anniversary of the Dedication of the church was held on Sunday, November 6, 1904, and was "a very profitable and pleasant occasion. It was a beautiful day and large congregations gathered at the morning and evening services," thus reported Rev. Edwin Genge, who was then pastor. He was assisted in the services by ex-Presiding Elder Griffin and former Pastor Rev. C. S. Robertson, who preached the sermon of the morning on "The Imitation of Christ." The addresses in the evening were for the greater part reminiscent, and led the people on to hope and work for the best things. In the Sunday-School, a Bible and resolutions were presented to Mrs. Helen Burr, thus honoring her completion of fifty years of service as a teacher in the Bible School.

Early in 1905, the church officials were notified that David F. B. Carson of Newburgh, N. Y. had left to the church a bequest of \$25,000 in memory of his father and mother, who during their lives had been strong and sturdy supporters of the church. The Quarterly Conference took fitting action and by unanimous vote assured the friends of the deceased benefactor of their appreciation of his generous gift. That part of the will which pertains to the legacy given to the Dalton Methodist Church is here inserted:

CARSON LEGACY

"I, David F. B. Carson, of the city of Newburgh, County of Orange, New York, being of sound mind and memory do hereby make, publish and declare the following as my last will and testament.

Item 14. I give and bequeath the sum of twenty thousand (\$20,000) dollars to the Methodist Church of Dalton, Berkshire County, Massachusetts. I wish the Trustees of this church to invest the said \$20,000 in the manner in which trust funds are authorized by the laws of the state of Massachusetts to be invested, and to keep the same so invested, and to cause the church property to be insured against loss or damage by fire in an amount equal to two-thirds of its cost, and request them to use the annual income from such trust fund as follows:

1. To pay the annual premiums on the church property.
2. To use such portion of such income for Sunday School, Christmas and other Church celebrations as the Trustees deem proper.
3. To use the residue of said income for the benefit of the poor of the church and for repairs and running expenses of the church. None of this balance is to be used for missionary society purposes.

I wish the Trustees to consult my nephew John D. Carson and my friend W. Murray Crane of Dalton as to the investment and re-investment of this trust fund.

December 15, 1903

David F. B. Carson

CODICIL

I give and bequeath the further sum of five thousand (\$5,000) dollars to the Methodist church of Dalton, Massachusetts, the Legatee named in my last will and testament.

I wish said \$5,000 to be invested in the same manner as the \$20,000 mentioned in said item 14 of my last will and testament and the income used in the same manner.
March 1, 1904."

Other special gifts, which have added greatly to the usefulness of the church, have been made from time to time by members who were always faithful and loyal. Soon after the church was built, David Burr placed within the altar a beautiful oak baptismal font in memory of his wife, Jane Burr, who for many years cared for the communion service. Bequests were left in the wills of Miss Mary Tyrrell, Mrs. Mary Van Deusen Wicks, Dr. W. W. Schofield, and Mr. Albert Van Buren. A Bausch & Lomb Dissolving Double-Lens Balopticon, with fire-proof screen built in over the pulpit, was presented to the church in 1925 in memory of Harry West Hitt. The individual communion cup was introduced October 19, 1904 and was given by the Ladies Friendly Aid Society. Back in 1852, the church records show that a similar gift came from a woman—"Mrs. Margaret Carson recently presented to the society an elegant sett of plaited communion service."

The Twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of the present church was observed in 1919 from October 19th to November 2d, when Rev. Walter Heisler was pastor. It was thought that a two-weeks' evangelistic observance would be an appropriate way of recalling the anniversary, and as far as possible former pastors were secured to come and preach at some of the special services. Thus Rev. A. J. Higgins and Rev. Eugene Wiseman, former superintendents, Rev. Edwin Genge, Rev. Leigh Diefendorf, and Rev. Chas. F. Noble, former pastors, assisted with the exercises, and Rev. C. S.

Robertson preached the anniversary sermon on Sunday, November second, taking for his subject, "The Resurrection of the Body."

In the autumn of 1926, an important removal from the church property took place. From the earliest history of Dalton Methodism, sheds, humble but useful, have stood back of the church building. When the first meeting-house was erected, the horse sheds in the rear opened toward the street and were used at all hours of the day by members of the church and townspeople, especially those who came from the hills and desired a comfortable place to leave the team while they traded at the few stores then found in Dalton. Each shed was owned and cared for by individual church members, who considered this part of the property their own responsibility, and people knew each shed by the name of the owner, just as inside the building the pews bore familiar family names. On the Sabbath, the sheds were filled to capacity, for many of the families were obliged to use horse and carriage in order to attend "divine worship." Lunches were often brought, and especially in the early days, the time between the morning and afternoon services was passed in social and friendly visiting. The sheds were also a convenient place to leave the horses while the family attended the rare, and consequently much enjoyed, entertainment in the adjoining town-hall. In those days when town-meeting was held, the North Street corner was most popular and interesting. On Saturdays the Dalton Public Library, in a small room on the first floor of the town hall, was opened and books were circulated, and Saturday evening was the time-honored hour for the choir rehearsals. When the new house of worship was built, the sheds were moved farther back and faced each other with an open space between the rows, but less and less were they used, as the automobile came to replace the horse. Many residents in Dalton recalled incidents of interest as they saw the razing of the Methodist sheds.

Seven years ago, in 1920, Troy Conference changed its five divisions to four and the Dalton appointment was placed in the Eastern District, which included part of the territory formerly known for years as the Troy District. At the Troy Conference assembly this spring, 1927, the name of this section was again changed and it is now called Rutland District. The Superintendent of the Rutland District is at present Rev. Leigh Diefendorf, who was pastor of the Dalton Methodist church from 1914 to 1918 and who is the only local minister on record to return to this charge in the advanced position. One other Dalton pastor, Rev. J. J. Noe, became Presiding Elder, as the office was then termed, but he was placed in charge of the Burlington District. The list of pastors covers a period of almost one hundred years, and in all that large number of leaders, only one has been called "from the church militant to the church triumphant" while serving actively as pastor in charge. Rev. William J. C. Wilson died July 9, 1918, after only three months with the Dalton church. Back in 1860, Rev. Albinus Johnson, who was pastor in 1855, died at Saratoga Springs at the age of thirty-six years, and his body was interred in Dalton in about the center of the Main Street Cemetery, where the grave is marked by a plain shaft monument. He is the only Methodist minister known to be buried in Dalton.

Methodism in Dalton dates from 1788 to 1927, a period of one hundred and thirty-nine years, and for ninety-three years it has been active as a church organization at its present location. During this time, the one motive which has dominated the preaching and all of the various church activities has been, and still may be, summed up in these lines:

"Christ for the world we sing;
The world to Christ we bring
With loving zeal."

The past has gone beyond recall and may not be lived over again, except as its memories and experiences enrich life today, serving as "stepping-stones to higher things." Continually the present should be better than the past, and the future better than the present. When John Wesley was leaving this life, he said, "The best of all is, God is with us." A church which is conscious of the living presence of the Heavenly Father must grow day by day and the influence exerted among the members and friends will unfailingly lead to unselfish, noble, and Christlike lives.

As to the future, who would dare to say what the years hold? In answer to the call, which comes so loud and clear out of the echoes from the past:

"Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are,"

the Dalton Methodist Episcopal Church, accepting the challenge which every high endeavor proclaims, and with eyes turned toward the light as revealed in the face of Jesus Christ, joyously declares to all

"The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made;
Our times are in his hand
Who saith, 'A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!'"

THE CHURCH

The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the word:
From heaven he came and sought her
To be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her,
And for her life he died.

Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation,
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued.

'Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till, with the vision glorious,
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great church victorious
Shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won:
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with thee.

Samuel J. Stone

VI

Name of Pastors With Years of Service

DALTON CIRCUIT

1831—Noah Bigelow, F. G. Hibbard
1832—Henry Burton
1833—A. S. Cooper, B. Isbell
1834—A. S. Cooper, J. H. Taylor
1835-1836—J. Ally, W. M. Chepp
1837-1838—Joseph Eames, Timothy Benedict
1839—E. B. Hubbard, E. Stover

STATIONED AT DALTON

1840—E. B. Hubbard, Amos Osborn
1841—Alfred Farr, Amos Osborn
1842—Alfred Farr, P. R. Stover, T. Benedict
1843—Asa C. Hand, P. R. Stover
1844—Samuel Stover

DALTON AND MIDDLEFIELD

1845—Wm. F. Hurd, Isaac Devoe, E. B. Haff
1846—P. P. Atwell, J. F. Crowl

DALTON

1847-1848—Timothy Benedict
1849-1850—Wm. Griffen
1851-1852—John Barnard
1853 —Wm. K. Gray
1854 —H. H. Smith
1855-1856—Albinus Johnson
1857-1858—Egbert H. Foster
1859-1860—J. Phillips
1861-1862—J. M. Edgerton

1863-1866—B. O. Meeker
 1867-1868—R. F. Wade
 1869 —A. Heath
 1870-1871—H. D. Kimball
 1872 —Robert Fox
 1873-1874—Wm. J. Tilley
 1875-1877—E. A. Blanchard
 1878-1880—A. F. Bailey
 1881-1883—F. G. Rainey
 1884 —B. F. Livingston
 1885-1886—M. Tator, S. McChesney (6 months)
 1887-1888—J. J. Noe
 1889-1892—C. F. Noble
 1893-1895—Chas. S. Robertson
 1896-1900—C. F. Wilcox
 1901-1905—Edwin Genge
 1906-1908—J. B. Armstrong
 1909-1913—Alexander McKinlay
 1914-1917—Leigh Diefendorf
 1918 —Wm. Wilson (3 months)
 1918-1921—Walter Heisler
 1922-1926—Henry C. Petty
 1927-1929—Wm. T. Wees
 1930 - Rob. L. Thompson.

VII

Dates of Organization of Societies

Sunday School, First Organization—1826
 Sunday School, Re-organization—1848
 Brotherhood Bible Class—November, 1906
 Fahola Bible Class—March 19, 1912
 Dorcas Class—September 9, 1918
 Woman's Home Missionary Society—December 16, 1887
 Mite Box Circle (Foreign Missionary Society)—September
 9, 1909
 Ladies' Friendly Aid Society—March 8, 1894
 Epworth League—January 8, 1894
 Junior Epworth League—February 28, 1896

VIII

1927 Officials

TRUSTEES

S. L. Young	L. P. Adams	A. L. Allen
C. H. Groesbeck	D. W. Burr, Pres.	J. H. Neumeister
John Mack	W. R. Pratt	John Warfield

Treasurer, D. W. Burr
Financial Secretary, N. L. Smith

STEWARDS

D. J. Pratt	C. H. Benson	Philo Brownson
Joseph Brooks	F. E. Hillman	W. A. Dickinson
Mark Stevens	P. H. Emerson	C. H. Bentley
Norman Smith	Mrs. Cora Smith	Elmer Crosier
Frank Smith	Mrs. Allie Stevens	Maurice Magnin
L. W. Souther	Harold Oles	F. D. Bolster
A. E. Barnes	William Pike	Leroy Bartlett
N. H. Ransford	Francis Tower	J. H. Kerr
J. S. Crowe	Frank Dewey	H. J. Whitmarsh
Buel Silliman	M. P. Briggs	Rufus Hildreth
	F. H. Ransford	

CLASS LEADERS AND EXHORTERS

E. M. Scott	W. A. Smith	J. H. Neumeister
A. J. Reed		J. P. Reed

Superintendent of Sunday School—Albert L. Allen
President, Ladies' Aid Society—Mrs. George Oles
President, Epworth League—Ray Thompson
Organist and Choir Director—Mrs. Eva Moulton

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